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## SIMPLICITY.

*'La simplicité est charmante, et il n'y a rien de si difficile.'*

Nothing more difficult than simplicity! What is there difficult about it? Have we not merely to let ourselves alone—to divest our minds and manners of the sophistications of art, and remain pure and simple as we came from the hands of nature? The 'charming simplicity' of the French referred to in the epigraph must be an affectation of fashion; for it is monstrous to suppose that simplicity should be a subject of study, pursued according to rule, and acquired with labour and difficulty. Simplicity implies the absence of labour, and the very act of striving destroys it. The saying quoted, therefore—so popular on the other side of the Channel—is a piece of mere Frenchness, and bespeaks the fantastic character of the national refinement.

But when we come to examine this common criticism, a difficulty besets us at the outset. If simplicity belongs to what is called nature, then the farther back we trace it in society, the more evident it will appear; till, on arriving at the savage state, we shall find it in original perfection. But is this consistent with the fact? Place a European, with his plain quiet dress, beside an American Indian, fluttering with feathers, adorned with scalps, painted in all the colours of the rainbow, and tell us which of these two is the child of nature. Compare, in like manner, the customs and ceremonies of the two specimens of humanity, and say which is the more simple? Facts, to confess the truth, are so far against us; experience appears to be opposed to theory: simplicity is not an instinct. If we proceed farther in the inquiry, we find that the contrast is not so great in this respect between American Indians, or other savages, and Europeans of an earlier age than the present. The elaborate magnificence of the feudal times, for instance, approaches more nearly than ours the 'state of nature'; and the ornaments which then glittered upon the persons of the women competed in point of number with those of our dusky sisters in the earliest days of society. The chief difference was, that the jewels of the former did not weigh down so terribly the cartilage of the ears and nose; but as for the comparative richness or poverty of the materials and workmanship, that was an adventitious circumstance with which real refinement had nothing to do: bits of coloured glass or polished bone were to the one precisely what barbaric pearl and gold were to the other.

The manners of the middle ages exhibited the same *rapprochement*. The courtiers of a negro prince of the present day creep about him on their knees; and the ceremony of feudal homage was at one time performed in France by the inferior, with a saddle on his back, presenting himself on all-fours before his

lord, and inviting him to mount. The farther back we go, the more extravagance we find in everything. Among ourselves, when two friends meet after a long separation, they shake hands warmly, and the sentiment of the occasion is exhibited only in their eyes and in a few kind words. This the New Zealanders regard as no better than a meeting of dogs. For themselves, they not only embrace and rub noses with *empressment*, but to signify the depth of their feelings, they then sit down opposite to each other, and drawing their mats over their heads, perform a hearty cry. It would thus seem, if we are to reason upon facts, that when we trace backwards from the present day the history of society, the farther we proceed we become the more entangled in sophistications and artificialities.

*Il n'y a rien de si difficile!*—Nothing so difficult as simplicity! Well, we must admit the proposition in so far as regards society in the aggregate. The world has striven hard for thousands of years to get rid of its extravagances, and slowly and painfully it has so far accomplished its aim. But the epigraph does not speak on the subject comparatively; it refers only to the present state of society, and asserts that among ourselves simplicity must be studied to be acquired. Surely this requires examination—although we are not so much inclined to smile at the Frenchness of the notion as we were at the outset. If the world has attained, in the process of civilisation, to a certain degree of simplicity, are we not born to it?—do we not take to it naturally?—or do men individually go through the same course as society in the aggregate, rising in one lifetime from the depths of savagism to the highest pinnacle of the refinement of the age? This idea seems odd at first sight; and yet if we throw a glance upon the constitution of the community we live in, we may chance to see every variety of character which has distinguished the social history of mankind. The terrific cruelty, the debasing superstition, the incomprehensible ignorance of savage life—all are illustrated before our eyes; while in other portions of the mass we find goodness as well as grace—knowledge, humanity, delicacy, and politeness; these two extremes being bound together so intimately by common characteristics allied in some measure to both, that the whole is seen to form one chain of human nature.

The ignorant are sought to be instructed, and the depraved to be reformed; and in attaining to knowledge and virtue, it is only reasonable to suppose that they acquire some portion of the external graces of civilisation, of which the most remarkable and the most characteristic is simplicity. But do not suppose that we allude in a special manner to the rise from the rudeness of a low status in life to the politeness of a higher: there are illustrations of the various stages of social progress in all conditions, and we have met with vulgar people

among the nobility themselves. What we wish to say—for we no longer hesitate to admit the truth of the epigraph—is, that simplicity is a distinguishing characteristic of refinement, not of rudeness, and that it is therefore to be attained only through a severe cultivation of the taste.

When vulgar people can afford it, they are always overdressed, their tables are overloaded, they are cumbersome in their hospitality; they are, in short, as extravagant in their manners as their prototypes in the earlier stages of society. They are fond of gaudy colours, or anything else that will distinguish them in the class to which they belong; and they ape the haughtiness of a half-civilised mediæval baron, who looked with complacency upon the saddle on his dependent's back, while he himself kissed the foot of his feudal lord. We have said that lords are sometimes vulgar, but, generally speaking, they are less so than other men. Nobody has much pretension who is sure of his own position. During a pleasure-trip the other day on the Clyde, we tried to enter into conversation with a lady and gentleman, apparently a married couple, who were admiring the scenery from the deck of the steamer; but it would not do. We had presented no introduction. An interchange of ideas with a stranger was out of the question; and with a cold monosyllable, and a colder look, they turned away. They were very grand; and if we did not shrink into ourselves, we at least applied elsewhere for consolation. Another lady and gentleman, likewise a married pair, were more accessible. They gave and accepted information; they exchanged social and kindly looks with their interlocutor; and they thus passed an agreeable half-hour—agreeable to him, and likewise to themselves, in consequence of their good-humour and simplicity. The former couple, we learned afterwards, belonged to the mercantile class, and were not distinguished in it by wealth or eminence of any kind: the latter were a peer of the realm and his lady, bearing a name well known in the great public questions of the day.

Simplicity is charming, and it is a thousand pities that it is so difficult. It is difficult on account of its complication, and because it is a thing that cannot be bought. A vulgar woman may obtain a dress of the most exquisite simplicity from the *modiste*, but the moment she puts it on, it loses its character. The air of simplicity, the manner, the motion, all are wanting; and it requires an experienced feminine eye to discern that she wears a gown of the highest fashion. The wearer must belong to the dress as well as the dress to the wearer.

Simplicity, as the result of the highest refinement, implies the total absence of pretence; and it is thus in a certain degree identified with truth as well as with taste. It is in absolute antagonism with imposture; and for this reason, when we see men making extravagant efforts to seem what they are not, we may conclude that they are still behind in social advancement. Simplicity, having no pretence, has no false pride, no noise, no bustle, no struggle. It 'uses all things gently.' Its quietude has a character of presence of mind. It is affable, conciliatory, condescending. In its social habits it has risen above the extravagances of savage natures—such as oaths, imtemperate drinking, manual jokes, and violent argumentation. In female dress, with the aid of artistic skill, it invests the common with an elegant and *recherché* character. It is to this article, dress, that the French *not* applies; and we would point to

the dress of high-bred women of the present day, as a remarkable illustration of the refined simplicity which characterises an advanced stage of civilisation. L. R.

## NOTES FROM THE NETHERLANDS.

### TRAVELLING—INCIDENTS—SCHOOLS.

RAILWAY time-tables in Holland generally terminate with a request to the travelling public to be at the stations a quarter of an hour before the time of departure of the trains; an arrangement unpalatable to those who value their minutes, or are deficient in patience. If you walk to the starting-place, you can of course please yourself in this particular; but if you take the omnibus, you will find the notice obeyed to the letter. The waiting is, however, more endurable for *derde klasse*, or third-class passengers, than at stations in this country, for it frequently happens that the second and third class waiting-rooms are one and the same, or sometimes the first and second. The humbler classes of the community are not made to feel so sensibly that they are without the pale as in England, where too often the accommodation provided for them ceases to be such in consequence of the oppressive limitations which attend it. The Dutch railways are well managed—the second-class carriages are painted white inside, which gives them a clean, cheerful appearance; and not being divided into compartments, a broad leathern strap is made to form the back of all the seats except those at the ends. The doors are set back, which leaves a recess on the outside, convenient for the guard in his visitations from one vehicle to another, though it diminishes the interior space. The third-class carriages are all covered with a roof, and instead of being enclosed at the sides, with only one or two small square holes for outlook, are provided with leathern curtains, which may be looped up or let down at pleasure. Such carriages as these, it need scarcely be said, are far preferable to the open roofless tubs with which English railway directors afflict their passengers, flattering themselves that such niggardliness fattens their revenue. The best third-class carriages I have ever travelled in in England are those on the line from Manchester to Preston: they are far preferable to the second-class of the Great Western or North Western, on which routes all but first-class passengers are 'done for' in a style that would do honour to Sally Braas. In Holland, too, the tickets are collected while the train is rolling: immediately after starting, the guard enters each carriage, and collects the tickets from those who alight at the first stopping-place; then for the next; and so on; a time-saving arrangement worthy of general imitation, and one which a traveller scarcely expects to find in vigour among the slow-moving Dutchmen. I could not help figuring to myself the astonishment which the *Snelheid* (Velocity), so was our locomotive named, must have excited in its first course over this flat region, where six miles an hour had long been the established pace.

On leaving the train at Delft, I went to the Academy of Engineers, to present one of my letters to Mr Simons, inspector-adviser to the government. The class-examinations were going on, and would not be over for two hours: I occupied the interval in visiting the Prinsenhof, the scene of William I.'s assassination, and his tomb in the Nieuwe Keerk. The town itself is quiet enough to suit the most silence-loving Quaker: it reminded me of one or two of our old cathedral towns, where the sight of four persons in the street at once causes somewhat of a sensation. The canals are as deserted as the footways: the only boat which I saw in motion was the scavenger's; two men poled it slowly along, receiving as they went on either side the refuse brought from the houses by the servants. Here and there a woman, stooping from the brink, was washing coarse linen in the water, or, dipping bucketsful of the stagnant fluid, by means of a hand-engine and vigorous

pumping, jet. Two edge of a larly wa in ten m his sabot of an unh It almost ments of want to Delft con At the and was order to Meer at convenie one day foot for This peculiari top of th to the c ditches a affording far away, dwarfs, the brim duckwee at a litt in these looking, England Dutch w same coo wards th half full gates ar with gr and you 'Paint scape is huge, to feet hig meet is star in bright portion miller a stately trim ga often de An e the Hag terrace, of it, ac of Styg people One w cared fo I lik back s parts o and th everyw dirt, or women lounging window to the squalor be seen After chose forwar Hardly when I in his Bosch

pumping, washed the front of the house with the tiny jet. Two boys sat with their legs dangling over the edge of the channel, one holding a rod and line, and lazily watching a float that moved about two inches in ten minutes, while the other, who had filled one of his sabots with water, was contemplating the struggles of an unhappy minnow gasping in the impromptu bath. It almost seemed that the shops, with their announcements of wares to sell, were a make-believe: who could want to buy anything in so dreamy a town? and yet Delft contains nearly 20,000 inhabitants.

At the time appointed I returned to the academy, and was favoured by Mr Simons with letters, and an order to view the drainage-works of the Haarlemmer Meer at any time that suited me. This was a great convenience, as the regulation is to admit visitors but one day in the week; and thus provided, I started on foot for the Hague.

This walk gave me a near view of many Dutch peculiarities. The straight, brick-paved road on the top of the dike, which at the same time forms a bank to the canal, flowing at one side, and a barrier to the ditches and drains which meet it at the other, besides affording space for a double row of trees, stretching so far away, that at last they seem to taper down to dwarfs, and close the passage. Every ditch was full to the brim, and being coated with a generous crop of duckweed, was scarcely to be distinguished from land at a little distance. With rare exceptions the grass in these well-watered meadows was coarse and ragged-looking, very inferior to the soft and smooth pastures of England. Notwithstanding their diligent drainage, the Dutch will have to apply a more efficient system if the same condition is to be reached; and a main step towards this will be to keep the ditches not more than half full, and establish a current along them. Field-gates are painted white, not unfrequently 'picked out' with green; barns are painted, fences are painted, and you are forced to think of the national proverb, 'Paint costs nothing.' The uniformity of such a landscape is broken by the numerous windmills. These are huge, tower-like structures, often more than a hundred feet high; the end of the central post in which the sails meet is generally ornamented with a handsome gilt star in relief, the spaces between the rays painted bright green or scarlet. In many instances the lower portion of the edifice serves as dwelling-house for the miller and his family, who are manifestly proud of their stately habitation. Then, too, the villas with their trim gardens and *lust-houses*: but all this has been so often described as to be familiar to most readers.

An easy walk of less than two hours brought me to the Hague. Just within the town-gate stands a stuccoed terrace, the Bosc de Guinea, and immediately in front of it, across the road, stagnates a foul and filthy ditch, of Stygian blackness and most offensive odour: how the people endure or survive the inhalation is a mystery. One would imagine the royal town should be better cared for.

I like to wander about a strange city; to inspect its back slums as well as the goodly streets. In some parts of the Hague the population is much crowded, and the signs of dense packing show themselves as everywhere else. Swarms of children grubbing in the dirt, or clattering to and fro in their wooden shoes; women squatting in loquacious groups; petty retailers lounging at their doors; clothes thrust from an upper window to dry on a pole: in-door life, in fact, migrated to the street. Yet it must be confessed that the horrid squalor so visible in many English towns is scarcely to be seen here.

After looking at the outside of three or four hotels, I chose the Lion d'Or. On entering, a waiter stepped forward to take my knapsack, and show me to a room. Hardly had he closed the door, and left me to myself, when he opened it again, and thrusting his head in, said in his imperfect French, 'Mynheer, on fera musique in's Bosch ce soir.' When the bell rang for dinner another

waiter met me at the foot of the stairs, and communicated the same piece of information: evidently music in the park was not an every-day occurrence. Among other dishes served at the table was one of boiled peas—cods dressed with butter. I had eaten of the same kind at Rotterdam, and found it very palatable; its frequent appearance at tables-d'hôte doubtless shows it to be a favourite dish. More than once I found the skin still adhering to the cod—a sufficient proof that other sorts as well as the skinless pea are eaten; and perhaps if people in England could be prevailed on to try this dish, they would find it an acceptable variety in their vegetable diet.

Shortly after dinner I strolled out to the Bosch: this fine park deserves all that has been said in its favour, with its forest-like plantations, dim green alleys, and sinuous lakes, bordered by meandering paths and bosky groves. Here and there, in some cool and pleasant recess, you come upon a 'pavillon,' with broad veranda and spacious saloon, and a large patch of the foreground occupied by regiments of tables and chairs, where you may smoke, and drink, and play dominoes to your heart's content. At times a beggar thrusts out a hand as you pass his position, generally taken up on a *tête de pont*, and importunes you for alms with persevering zeal until you are out of hearing, or drop a coin: and if tired, there are numerous seats on which you may rest. At seven o'clock, as had been intimated, the military band began to play, and for two hours a succession of pieces was given with great taste and spirit. For some time previously the town had been sending out its population, and now there was a mixture of all classes promenading round a circular lake, or through a sweep under the tall trees. There were well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, clerks, artisans—scarcely a male without a cigar or pipe in his mouth—nurses and housemaids with clean aprons and white caps, and a sprinkling of soldiers in dark-blue uniforms and jaunty caps, many of them presenting a fine military appearance. At the last notes of the concluding piece the crowd drew off in detachments, some back to the town, others to a farther stroll in the wood, and a multitude to the pavilions. Then the saloons were lighted up, the ends of cigars and pipes twinkled in the twilight, and fuller rose the vaporous columns from the smokers' lips, intermingled with the steam of tea and coffee; while corks were drawn with a spasmodic cluck, followed by the clink of glasses and the merry *glou-glou* as the wine leaped forth: all appeared to enjoy themselves, and no one was uproarious. As I sauntered slowly hither and thither, the remark of Sir William Temple, ambassador to the Hague in 1668, seemed still applicable. Speaking of the upper classes, he says—'They strive to imitate the French in their mien, their clothes, their way of talk, of eating, of gallantry; and are, in my opinion, something worse than they would be, by affecting to be better than they need; making sometimes but ill copies; whereas they might be good originals, by refining or improving the customs and virtues proper to their own country and climate. They are otherwise an honest, well-natured, friendly and gentlemanly sort of men.'

On my going next morning to the museum at the Maurits Huis, the doorkeeper refused to admit me without a *carte d'entrée*. Knowing that the building was open to the public, and already provided for out of the taxes, I declined to pay a fee, and for the time withdrew, and went to the royal palace, which stands quite unpretendingly at one side of the High Street. A servant, who could speak only Dutch, conducted me through the rooms, which contain nothing especially remarkable, excepting a huge vase, some full-length portraits of members of the royal family, a large painting representing the assassination of William I., and another the death of De Ruyter: the charge made for the visit, which occupied not more than ten minutes, was a guilder. I afterwards presented one of my letters to M. Holtrop, keeper of the Royal Library, and met with a most cordial reception, the more gratifying, as I



had neither rank nor fame wherewith to substantiate my claim. He at once showed me the treasures of the library under his care, and the museum of coins and gems, some of which are unique; and then accompanied me to the palace of the late king, where I saw the fine collection of paintings, drawings, and sculpture which have since been sold by auction to pay his majesty's debts. The 'Colombine' of Leonardo da Vinci is said to be worth 50,000 guilders—a handsome sum if it can be obtained (it fetched 40,000 at the sale); and if the other paintings sell equally well, the monarch's creditors will have little cause to complain. How much better it would be were kings to avoid incurring debts! Among the drawings are those which belonged to Sir Thomas Lawrence; perhaps they will now come back to this country, from which, as some people say, it was a disgrace ever to let them go. One of the marbles struck me as particularly beautiful: it is the work of a Dutch sculptor, Van der Ven, who executed it at Rome in 1847. It represents Eve in a sitting posture, with one arm raised, the serpent near her holding an apple in its mouth; but she has not yet yielded to the temptation, has known no pain or sorrow, and sits there the very perfection of loveliness, innocence, and joy personified. Another statue, by a Flemish artist, would not have disgraced an Athenian sculptor, so truly does it exhibit the masculine beauty of inflexible character. One might well be proud of such a collection, which sufficiently refutes the popular notion, that the Hollanders are deficient in taste and appreciation of the fine arts.

We went next to the Maurits Huis, where no opposition was now offered to my entrance. M. Holtrop assured me that my former exclusion was not regular, and called the attention of one of the principals to the abuse. The curiosities here are really such, but are overcrowded, and not so well arranged as they might be. The model of a Dutch house made for Peter the Great is more truly a work of art than is commonly supposed. It represents accurately a gentleman's dwelling of the period, and was constructed by first-rate artificers. The diminutive services of crockery and china were made especially for the occasion; as also the little piles of towels, sheets, and other household linen, which were woven, and not cut from a wide piece; the books in the library, too, and the Bible on the stand, are real printed volumes—not dummies. Few persons who see this example of a Dutch ménage of bygone days will regret that the czar died before it was finished. After this we proceeded to the Ministry of the Interior, where, by the good offices of my conductor, a letter was obtained for me from the minister to the director of the pauper colonies, which I purposed subsequently to visit.

Visitors are freely admitted to the chambers of the States-General at the Hague. The Tweede Kamer, or House of Commons, is a room with white walls, ranges of seats and tables covered with green baize, a green canopy over the Speaker's chair, and galleries all round for strangers. The tables were covered with books and papers; most of the members were reading or writing; no one sat with his hat on; and all paid attention to business. I heard three short speeches on the Navigation Laws, which it was proposed to modify in accordance with enlightened principles of commercial policy. As each gentleman spoke, most of the members rose from their seats and grouped themselves on the floor in front of him, shifting their position as the debate made the tour of the benches. Since then, the proposed changes have been passed into a law.

As a matter of course, no one goes to the Hague without visiting Scheveningen. A pleasant walk of three miles along an avenue formed by a continuous grove or belt of trees brings you to this fishing-village, where the lamps hang from chains in the centre of the street—where four or five shell-shops remind you of Margate—where you may sometimes see, as I did, eighty fishing-schuys on the shore at once discharging their cargoes—fishermen wading through the breakers with laden

baskets, the funny contents of which are handled and criticised by a hundred clamorous fishwomen—and where two boxes, with a slit in the lid, and *Gedenkt den Armen* on their front, lead you, as you approach the sands, to think of the poor. It is really well worth while to walk to Scheveningen.

One of the annoyances to which travellers are liable is that of commissionaires, or guides, who, whenever a stranger shows himself in the streets of a foreign town, dog his steps with pertinacious offers of service. This infliction awaited me on my return from Scheveningen: a man came up, offering to show me this and show me that; and neither threats nor intreaties availed to make him leave me to myself. Thus he followed me the whole length of the Voorhout; at last, weary of his importunity, I thought of trying a bribe, and gave him a quarter-florin to go about his business. No sooner had he received it, than he said, 'Ah, mynheer, I can't go away now till I have done something to earn this.'

'Well, then,' I replied, 'do you know where to find an Armen school?'

'Ja, mynheer, ja: I'll take you to the one where I was taught.'

I was rather pleased at this disposition on his part to revisit the scene of his youthful studies. A walk of ten minutes brought us to a school at the end of the Dennen Weg, where, in reply to my request for admittance, Mynheer van Brenk, a benevolent-looking old man in morning-gown and slippers, came forward, and inviting me in with many assurances that my visit afforded him pleasure, led the way through his house to the school. The latter is a long building, divided into three square apartments by partitions fitted with sliding glazed doors. Each room contains four sets of desks and forms, placed so as to leave a passage all round close to the walls, and at right angles across the centre; and each room was occupied by boys and girls—two sets of desks appropriated to one sex, and two to the other. The whole number of scholars was 776—being, of the most advanced or first-class, 210; second-class, 300; third-class, 266; and there are seven teachers besides the master, all of whom were originally pupils in the school. The youngest scholars enter at six years of age: at the time of my visit, some forty or fifty of these juveniles were acquiring the rudiments of arithmetic from an abacus, or Russian frame, as the Dutch term it, manipulated by a teacher; another group were writing on slates; the combining of consonants and vowels into monosyllables tasked the abilities of a third; while the most numerous party sat in front of a large black-board, absorbed in the initiative process, with which even the profoundest philosopher must commence, of calling capital letters by their right names, or rather giving them their true sounds. For the absurd practice of saying *be, se, de, &c.* is not followed by Dutch schoolmasters; they very properly enunciate the power of the letter only, hence *b, s, d, n, m, &c.* as they would be sounded by a Frenchman. Orthography is a most formidable task in English schools, chiefly from the discrepancy between sound and sense: for instance, a child is called to spell the word *cat*; he hesitates, on which the teacher says *se a te*, and the bewildered learner is told that these sounds convey the word in question. Let any one repeat to himself the powers *k a f*, and he will soon perceive that spelling may be divested of half its difficulties. To come back to the school: I observed that two consonants similar in power were placed together on the board, *d* and *n*, and the teacher exercised the wits of his youthful class by pointing from one to the other until they knew how to distinguish between *d* and *n*. Then at a word from the head-master every pair of little hands was laid flat on the desk, and the 266 tiny voices struck up several simple melodies; and if cheerful looks are a true index, not a child present found school irksome.

I next passed to the second-class room, where of course the exercises of the first were at a more ad-

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vanced stage; and then to the last. Here were writing in books, geography, the higher rules of arithmetic, comprising the sum of a plain and useful education. Any one who has received letters from different parts of Holland, must have observed the great similarity in the style of handwriting by different persons; this arises from the system on which they are taught resting on three principles, comprising all the forms of written letters. Hence it is that Dutch handwriting is generally so very sloping, and so similar in character among all classes.

The geography lesson was given by the head-teacher: he stationed himself by the black-board, and asked who could put in Friesland. A dozen hands were held up, and one of the boys rising from his seat, traced the outline of this province with a piece of chalk; another marked Gronningen; another Drenthe, Overysseel, and so forth, until an outline map of the Netherlands was completed. Then with a few words stating the source, course, and outfall of rivers, such lands as were capable traced these particulars, as well as sites of the chief towns, and islands off the coast. I was permitted to put a few questions, the result of which was an impression that, although the children were very expert in the geography of their native land, they were but slightly so in that of foreign countries.

After this, half-past eleven having arrived, preparations were made for the singing lesson. Reading and writing-books were collected; the boy or girl at the head of the form laid the books in a pile, as they were handed up in turn from those below, and in this way they were put aside, ready for orderly distribution in the afternoon or next day. Each pair of hands, as in the youngest school, was laid on the desk, and then the head-teacher, extending one hand with open fingers, to represent the stave-lines of music, pointed with a short ruler to each line or space through all the scales of the gamut. The precision with which the children sang the notes was remarkable, changing rapidly from high to low. After this preliminary, at my request the national anthem, 'Neerlands Bloed,' was sung in four parts; then the old 'Volkslied' of the time of Willem I., a rugged and stirring measure, which reminded me of Luther's hymn 'Ein feste Burg,' &c. On listening to the hearty tones of so many voices, their entire accord, and ready pause or repetition, I was no longer at a loss to account for the mighty burst of sound that echoed through the lofty aisles of St Laurent's Church at Rotterdam. A moment's silence succeeded the singing; the teacher, joining his hands, pronounced devoutly a short prayer, and the morning school was over.

I expected a sudden rush and clatter of feet; but in place of this, one girl of each form rose and distributed bonnets, while the boys did the same with caps. Then, at the master's bidding, 'Catholics first,' a number of boys and girls left the room without disturbance, followed by the other forms in succession, all in perfect order and quiet. Precedence was given to the Catholics, as they had to go immediately to church for the noonday service. The same quiet characterises the whole of the proceedings: there is none of that deafening din so prevalent in English schools, as though noise were essential to knowledge; not a voice is heard except that of the teacher and any pupil who may be reciting.

Children are received into this school at the age of six, and remain until twelve; 100 names are now on the books for admission. Parents are not allowed to remove them on caprice; and whenever a child is absent, another is immediately sent to inquire the cause. Sickness is the only excuse admitted. Willful absence of fifty times in six months is punished by irrevocable exclusion; but such a case, as the master reports, does not happen above once in four years. The hours of attendance are from eight to twelve in the forenoon, and from two to four in the afternoon; besides two hours, from six to eight in the evening, also gratuitously,

for such pupils as, having completed their term, and gone out to work, wish to perfect themselves still more in their studies. The Wednesday afternoon is occupied by the upper class in singing, when the scholastic arrangement is somewhat departed from, and the children sit in groups, according to the quality of their voices.

There are seven of such Armen or Poor Schools at the Hague, in which 5000 children receive gratuitous instruction. This number comprises an eighth of the population of the town; and one cannot but be hopeful of so numerous a band, trained up to devout and orderly habits, and acquainted with the substantial elements of a sound education. Mynheer van Brenk has worthily filled his post during thirty-three years. I could not help speaking of the satisfaction he must feel in looking back on so long and so useful a career. He replied that his profession had always interested and engaged his sympathies as well as his abilities. For my part, my two hours' visit had afforded me almost unmingled gratification; the alloy was in the contrast with the state of education in England, and her millions unable to read or write. When I was about to depart, the worthy schoolmaster gave me a sheet of paper, and begged me to leave him a memorandum of my visit; and as I afterwards took leave of him, with a cordial hand-pressure on both sides, he said, 'Farewell, mynheer; I hope soon to hear that your puissante patrie will have enough of schools as good, or better than this'—a sentiment in which I most cheerfully unite.

## MRS WRIGHT'S CONVERSATIONS WITH HER IRISH ACQUAINTANCE.

### FAMILY MISFORTUNES.

*Mrs Wright.* Come here, little boy; why are you running away? And what are you doing here? Don't you know nobody is allowed to come through the young plantations?

*Boy.* Sure an' I wasn't, miss! only jist crassin' the corner.

*Mrs Wright.* Do you call this the corner? It is the very middle of the young wood. Besides, it is just as wrong to cross the corner as to be where you now are. Where were you going?

*Boy.* Nowhere at all, miss—only jist divartin' meself.

*Mrs Wright.* That answer wout do for me. You know perfectly well it is not a true one. I ask you again, where were you going?

*Boy.* [Sulkily.] Why, thin, I suppose I was takin' the short coot to the Widow Donovan's for a penn'orth o' backy for my granny that she sint me for; an' I'll never do so no more.

*Mrs Wright.* This is not the way to the Widow Donovan's; she lives quite in the opposite direction. What did you throw down there behind the rock when I called to you to stop?

*Boy.* Throw down! sorra hap'orth. What 'ud I have to throw down?

*Mrs Wright.* We shall see. Come back with me to the turn of the bank. Here is what you threw down—a large bundle of green boughs cut from the spruce-firs!

*Boy.* [Crying.] It wasn't my fault. I should get them, she tould me, and sint me for them; an' sure we thought yerself wasn't in it—but I'll niver do so no more.

*Mrs Wright.* Who is your grandmother? What is your name?

*Boy.* [Very quickly.] Paddy Toole, miss—an' got no father.

*Mrs Wright.* What Paddy Toole? I know of no Paddy Toole hereabouts, nor Widow Toole either.

*Boy.* At the cross there above.

*Mrs Wright.* There is no cabin near the cross-roads that I remember, if you mean them.

*Boy.* Not a know I know thin.

*Mrs Wright.* We shall find out. Pick up that bundle of boughs, and follow me. Conally, who is this boy?

*Conally.* The greatest young blackguard in the country. So you want a half a day again in the turf-house, you young thief you, where I locked you up last Wednesday was only a week for helpin' yerself so quite an' easy to the master's turf?

*Mrs Wright.* What's his name, Conally?

*Conally.* Mat Cogan's his name, and as big a rogue as his father before him, and that's no triflin' character to give the chap. Sure he had to lave the country for sheep-stalin'. Them all's a bad set.

*Mrs Wright.* Well, Mat, since I now know who you are, we will walk on together to your grandmother's cabin, and I will speak to her about you. We must try and get something better for you to do than you seem to have been taught hitherto. Mrs Cogan, I have brought you home your little grandson, whom I caught in the young plantation on the hill with all these green boughs, just cut or broken off the trees.

*Mrs Cogan.* You young villain you! Is this a way ye are when ye're mitchin'? In his honour's shrubberies, you dirty vagabone? Wait till I come at you!

*Mrs Wright.* Pray, Mrs Cogan, moderate your anger. Look at your own fire there, and tell me what you are burning?

*Mrs Cogan.* Whins, my lady jewel; God iver bless ye! Whins that I strive to gather to light my little fire these hard times on the poor, to bile my little pat for the supper for them childer that's left wid me, an' don't belong to me, an' I strooglin' to rare them dacent; God help me!

*Mrs Wright.* This is not whin: this is a branch of fir. You send this boy out to steal; you scold him only before me for fetching home what he went out on purpose for, and you call this rearing him decently: you are rearing him to disgrace and misery.

*Mrs Cogan.* An' sure it's the truth ye're spakin', my lady avourneen; for it's all sorrow that's fell on me, that's heart-broke an' massacrayed among them. There was his father: I had but the two sons, an' this was the oldest, an' as fine an' agreeable a boy as iver a mother rared. An' all goin' on reglar, an' labourin', an' helpin', an' me quite plased, an' the father as well. Took up and consorted wid a girl—I don't know what she was indeed, but a great dancer at the patterns, an' a tay-drinker, an' a company-keeper, an' a fine wholesome-lookin' girl as you'd wish to see—an' the ind of it was, they got married, an' we shut the door upon them in course; and so, my dear, they wint from bad to worse; an' she made off wid herself; and my poor boy, he had to lave the country, and never tuk the child wid him, but left him, if ye plase, wid me—the young thief o' the world, to be breakin' his honour's fine trees this way, an' I a'most broke strivin' to kape the bit in him, the vagabone!

*Mrs Wright.* The poor boy is hardly likely to do better than his father, the way you are bringing him up—neither at work nor at school, taught to deceive, and to steal, and to tell falsehoods to hide his ill practices. You had another son, why does not he look after this unfortunate child?

*Mrs Cogan.* Oh, thin, if that wasn't the take in! Ye wouldn't believe it, my lady dear, the rogues an' robbers that we fell in wid. An' we goin' to marry our Ned to a girl in all honesty, promisin' the bit o' ground, and the few shillins' we had, knowin' the brother 'ud niver come back to claim it, an' in course it should fall to Ned. An' the dacent man that had this fine daughter, he made the grandest of promises, an' offered her, an' hapes of money, an' cattle, an' what not, an' couldn't make enough of Ned on account of what he expected wid him, an' the little spot of ground ye see. Well, we war all agreeable, an' Ned an' the father was quite intirely plased, an' wint up the both o' them to the girl an' her father, and was all mighty pleasant, an' the best of good things purvised, an' a mighty dacent place; an' 'Will ye come,' says he, says the girl's father, 'an' see the

cows milked this pleasant evenin', Mr Cogan?' says he. 'There's one on im,' says he, quite off-hand like, 'as gives her ten quarts at a mail, or all as one, most times.' Now it was jist this, and nothin' else, that tuk my husband up, you'll understand—jist to see for his own self all what was in it, 'cause there's no trustin' to reports, an' they in course makin' the most of themselves, an' no harm. So he gave consent, an' they wint out across the bawn; and, my dear, there was sitch a sight of cows! more nor six or seven, all in the vales, an' the fine hay lyin' afore them, an' the girl's milkin', an' sure enough there was the ten quarts from the black cow, an' no mistake. So ye see my poor Mat was quite in delight, an' was intirely agreeable, an' had the weddin' an' all passed over, an' we wor a'most broke makin' up the little handful of money for sitch a grand match for Ned's part of the bargain. Well, they war marrit, an' there was an' ind. An' says my husband one fine mornin', 'Nelly,' says he, 'I'll up,' says he, 'an' give a look at Ned in his grand houlding, and see them fine cows of his agin,' for they lived, Ned and his new wife, wid the girl's father, in his possessions. An' so my poor husband wint up an' found the place, and all mighty civil, an' had their tay, an' the best of good tratement; and thin says my husband, jokin' an' funnin'—he was so satisfied, ye see—'Now for the ten-quart cow!' An' there she was aitin' her hay, an' she was all there was: the devil another beast was in it, cow nor calf, nor four-feet of one sort nor another owned the place, barrin' a pig! All the rest was borrit—begged and borrit from the neighbours round—to make a show an' a deception, an' incline us for the match! Oh musha, musha, my lady jewel, but they wor all robbers together, an' made my poor Ned as bad as themselves, they did: may the Lord reward them, as he will, plase goodness, an' has, for it didn't thrive wid them, nor couldn't, an' they're all a'most scattered now, an' my poor boy along wid them!

*Mrs Wright.* You had your son, you know, as you reared him: you set him a bad example, and you can't be surprised that he followed it; and as for his wife's people, they seem to have been very much like yourselves. Still, as you kept your land, and must have had some stock upon it, I don't understand how you come to be so miserably poor as I this day find you.

*Mrs Cogan.* Stop till I tell ye: ye didn't hear the half. 'Twas but a wishy little piece of ground we owned, an' there was little use in us strivin' for to make out the rint from it, for it wasn't in it. We nayther ate it, nor drank it, nor wore it; an' man alive couldn't do more than we did in regard of management, an' tillin', an' consacre, an' jobbin' bastes, an' one thing or another, an' all no use; for the bare livin' was all we could make out of it, let alone pay rint. So we casts our eyes round, and there was a boy owned a fine meadow that inclined for to go aff wid himself to Ameriky, where his people had wint before him the most of them, an' had a field besides, or a couple of them, an' we considered he might be purvaild on to sell his interest chape.

*Mrs Wright.* But how could you buy it, so much as you had spent, and so little as you had made, owing to the poverty of the old houlding?

*Mrs Cogan.* Saved it, my jewel! managed, an' made, an' stroogled, an' wanted, an' contrived, an' scraped it together, an' had it hid there above in the tatch waitin' the boy's convaniance. Two ten-pound notes they were, as meself had saved from better times. Well, you see, the gale cam' round, an' my husband must face the agint whether or no, an' he owin' him five half years, an' the rint three pounds, an' the back half year. Lady Wright, my jewel, the land couldn't pay it; we was a'most broke strivin' to make it, an' had but the bare two pounds towards it, an' we, after sellin' a cow in the fair, an', as bad-luck would have it, where should we put the differ but up in the tatch too; an' dresses himself, an' shaves, an' takes the big-coat, an' his stick, an' puts up his hand, an' outs the two notes, an' away he goes. All the tintins was in it. An' says the agint whin he sees

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my Mat, mighty stiff-like, lookin' in his books, an' spakin' short enough, 'Cogan,' says he, 'you owe six half-years.' 'I do not, an' please yer honour,' says my husband quiet an' civil, as was becomin'. 'I owe five half-years, an' the back half-year.' 'Makin' six, sir,' says the agint, quite stern-like; for this was the new agint, a mighty stiff kin' o' man, that didn't know the people's ways, an' to the letter,—'makin' six, sir,' says he; 'an' I'll expect you to pay it.' Well, my husband got all in a tremble, the unfortunate creature, an' laid down the hat on the ground, opened his big-coat, set by the stick, an' in to the waistcoat pocket, an' out wi' the two notes. 'Here's my all,' says he, 'an' hard set to make it'—which was true for ye, as God he knows—'an' the devil a penny more,' says he, 'have I to give ye, an'—' 'Stop,' says the agint, very ready; 'hand over the cash. Very well,' says he, inspectin': 'all right—all as it should be. I'll give you a receipt in full,' says the agint, quite civil, 'an' your change, Cogan,' says he; 'an' remember! no more back half-years.' It was the two ten-pound notes, my lady jewel, the unfortunate man had took down out of the tatch, an' we war ruined intirely—clane done for; and my poor husband niver held the head up after. Oh, masha, masha! wasn't he the persecutedest—[Cries.]

*Mrs Wright.* Mrs Cogan, you are telling me most shocking stories. I could not have believed in such unprincipled doings. One is worse than the other.

*Mrs Cogan.* It is, my lady, an' the worse to come yit. My own daughter, the only girl I had, an' she denied nothin' that ever I knowed she tuk a fancy to, an' many a thing, unbeknown to the father, souled, an' she given the money for her diversions, breakin' my heart to plase her, an' had a match ready, twenty acres of ground the boy had, no less, that her father an' I intended for her, an' she tuk a notion, an' departed one fine mornin', made her disappearance, an' no more word about it.

*Mrs Wright.* What! did she go off by herself alone?

*Mrs Cogan.* Bedad an' she did not, by no means, but tuk the little servin'-boy in her hand an' my old flannel petticoat, the vagabone.

*Mrs Wright.* Ran away with the serving-man I suppose you mean? Who was he? What was he like?

*Mrs Cogan.* The height of the numberless, my lady—the dickens an inch more! An' for attin! he'd bate the world.

*Mrs Wright.* Well, it's lucky she didn't take the new flannel petticoat at anyrate!

*Mrs Cogan.* Faix, an' she knew better. Sure, hadn't I all my little savings quilted into the back o' the ould one, under the belt, in the gathars! Never a know I know what was in it: all I'd made by my own endeavourin' ever since we war married. But she knows, an' the Liverpool people knows; for 'twas there they wint, and tuk a lodgin', an' ate it, an' drank it, an' wore it, an' off to Ameriky wid the rest of it!

#### A DAY IN THE PORT OF LONDON.

At a time when Holborn was a rural village, and two or three country-houses occupied the space which is now the Strand, Queen Elizabeth was so much concerned at the magnitude of London, that she issued a proclamation against further building, affirming that if the metropolis grew any larger, there would be no possibility of providing food at reasonable prices for so vast a multitude of inhabitants. We smile at this crotchety of the 'fair virgin throned by the west;' and yet it is less surprising than the apathy with which we of the present day witness the perfect facility with which the wants are supplied of a couple of millions of human beings congregated in a single capital. We have a vague notion that the articles of necessity, comfort, and luxury we see in such abundance around us are not all of home production; and we even connect, somehow or other, this supply with the 'forest of masts' rising from the Thames and its docks. But the actual business of the

port of London few of us know anything about: our minds never attempt to grasp the idea; and the ships, the quays, the docks, the wagons, the warehouses, the counting-houses, are jumbled together in our imagination in a vast, formless, indefinite, and withal vulgar whole, to which we give the name of City.

Some there be, however, whose curiosity is aroused by the misty and mighty subject; who endeavour to comprehend it, and who, comprehending it, or supposing that they do so, take the trouble of indoctrinating such of their neighbours as may choose to listen. Of these persons is Mr Thomas Howell, who conceived the idea of bringing the subject within grasp, by ascertaining, so far as might be possible, what was the actual business done in the port of London in a single day. With this view he provided himself with the official papers issued by the customhouse last year; and selecting (we presume) the most crowded day, which was the 17th of September, he made himself master of its contents. This document he used as the text of a lecture delivered before a suburban society—the Clapham Athenæum; and we have now sat down to reproduce, for the benefit of a wider audience, some of his leading facts.\*

On the single day referred to, 121 ships, navigated by 1387 seamen, and with a registered tonnage of 29,699 tons, arrived in the port of London. Of these only fifteen were foreign vessels; the rest belonged to this country. They came from the east, west, north, and south; and to trace their course, we should have to go round the entire globe. Beginning at the north, they were from Archangel and St Petersburg; from the Prussian ports, and from those of Hamburg, Holland, France, the Channel Islands, Portugal, Gibraltar; from five of the Mediterranean emporia; from the west and south coast of Africa; from the Indian presidencies and the Straits of Malacca; from Canton and Shanghai in China; from Manila in the eastern Archipelago; from Adelaide and Port Philip in Australia; from the coasts of South America, and nine of the English, Spanish, and Danish West India islands; from New York and Boston; and from Halifax, Quebec, and Newfoundland.

It may be conceived that the cargoes of these ships formed a very miscellaneous assemblage of the treasures of commerce. Among the more necessary articles were some 320,000 cwts. of sugar: not a very extraordinary quantity, since 7,000,000 cwts. were imported in the course of the year—an aggregate which paid nearly L.4,000,000 sterling to the revenue. There were 16,000 chests of tea; an inconsiderable portion of the 53,000,000 lbs. imported during the year in eighty or ninety ships, and paying about L.5,500,000 of duty. There were 7400 packages of coffee, out of 63,000,000 lbs. for the year, presenting to the chancellor of the exchequer L.640,000. Besides the more important articles, there were many of less moment—such as rice, cocoa, tapioca; upwards of 3000 sheep and other animals, 8000 packages of butter, 50,000 cheeses, and 900,000 eggs. The year's supply of the last, drawn chiefly from France, numbered nearly 98,000,000, and paid L.36,700 duty.

Among articles of another description may be mentioned 4458 bales of wool; the importations for the year being about 75,000,000 lbs., added to 100,000,000 lbs. of home growth. Elephants' teeth, hides, horns, tallow, wood and timber of all kinds, copper ore, zinc, cork, cod-liver oil, and Peruvian bark, are a few of the other articles in this department. Among the more curious importations are 1250 tons of granite from Guernsey, 1000 bundles of whisks from Trieste, bones of animals collected from the plains of South America, their hoofs from Australia, and heaps of rags from Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Germany.

Some of the articles of luxury are silk, wine, rum, gin, spices, anchovies, turtle, and pine-apples; together

\* A Day's Business in the Port of London: a Lecture Delivered at a Meeting of the Clapham Athenæum, April 29, 1850. By Thomas Howell, Esq. London: Simpkin. 1850.

with statuary marble and alabaster figures and ornaments. Tobacco should have a sentence of its own, since the yearly importation was 43,000,000 lbs.; the ruined and ill-used people of England spending upon the filthy indulgence between L.4,000,000 and L.5,000,000 of good money. Another item that may be worth mentioning is 219 packages of treasure, consisting of Spanish dollars or doubloons, Sycee silver from China, and rapiers from Hindoostan.

So much for the arrivals; but the warehousing of goods previously arrived forms an important part of the business of the day. We need not go into particulars, however, on this subject, since the articles are pretty nearly the same as those already enumerated—with the addition of fifty marble mortars, and 1075 slabs of tin. But the goods unwarehoused, or, technically speaking, 'taken for consumption,' give a good idea of the omnivorous appetite of London. Whale fins and sperm-oil from the fisheries—corals, or silk handkerchiefs, indigo, camphor, shellac, lac dye, saltpetre, hemp, and jute, from India—quicksilver from Spain—isinglass and bristles from Russia—Iceland moss, honey, and leeches, from Hamburg—bees'-wax from the coast of Africa, manna from Palermo, macaroni from Naples, sugar-candy from Holland, lemon-oil from Messina, 81,000 lbs. weight of currants from the Ionian islands, and 5760 bars of iron from Sweden—such are some of the articles that on this day were carried away in hundreds of groaning wagons, to disappear in the ever-craving maw of the metropolis.

This will not appear surprising if we recollect our own individual requirements. We ransack the world for the materials of a meal, and of the furniture of our houses. 'If I take the apparel of any gentleman present,' says the lecturer, 'I find that his coat is made of the wool of Saxony or Hungary, that he is using the flax of Russia, Ireland, or Flanders, the cotton of America, the kid-skins of Italy, the hides of the Cape, the silk of India, the horns of South America, the iron of Staffordshire, and the ivory of Ceylon—all these are in daily use; while he may wear upon his finger a ring made from the gold of Brazil, ornamented with a pearl from Ceylon, or a diamond from Borneo. Upon the conclusion of my lecture, he will protect himself from cold by a wrapper made from the wool of Cashmere; for his hat he is indebted to the beaver of Hudson's Bay; and should it unfortunately rain, he will unfold an umbrella in which the silk of Italy and China, after it has been dyed by the logwood of Jamaica, is expanded upon whalebone from the Arctic Seas, supported upon a cane from the island of Java—the cane has a ferrule made from the copper of South America, and a handle composed of horn from Calcutta, inlaid with mother-o'-pearl from Singapore or Manila. The costume of the fairer sex would prove still more various; for in addition to many of the articles I have enumerated, there are the furs of America, or the feathers of Africa, the rich silks of India, China, or France, the shawls of Cashmere or Paris, and the ribbons of St Etienne; and all these fabrics or materials are witnesses to the importance of commerce, and forcibly remind us of the obligations we owe to our fellow-creatures in all parts of our globe.'

We have now run cursorily over a few of the articles brought into London to afford a day's business to its port; but this is giving only one side of the subject: it is considering the city only as a recipient of the treasures of commerce, whereas it is equally active as a distributor of them to the rest of the world. Only a portion of the good things we have mentioned are consumed within the kingdom, while the rest are reshipped and despatched to other countries. England is the greatest purchaser on the face of the earth; but she is so because she is the greatest carrier. 'The timber and deals,' says Mr Howell, 'received from the Baltic and America, are shipped to Adelaide and the Cape of Good Hope. Rice, indigo, silks (particularly the corals before alluded to), drugs, tea and sugar, from India and China, are shipped to Riga, Koningsberg,

Hamburg, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Calais, Boulogne, and Patras, for consumption on the continent of Europe; and, what is somewhat singular, is the exportation, principally to France, of very large quantities of raw silk. We also ship freely to Germany our sheeps' wool from Australia, and the finer and more silky Mohair wool which is imported from Turkey. To Barbadoes there is a shipment of guano received from Peru. Hides from South America are forwarded to Antwerp and Copenhagen. Spanish and Portuguese wines are shipped to many places—Bombay, Calcutta, Ceylon, Petersburg, and others; while brandy and rum are still more widely circulated. There is an exportation of glass beads, the manufacture of Venice, to the Cape of Good Hope, for the use of the Hottentot or the Caffre, who is dignified by the adornment; while the Moors of Mogadore have ordered fifty cwt. of ginger from Calcutta. To Rotterdam, on this day, we sent Peruvian bark from the western coast of South America, and gum-arabic from Bombay. Skins from the shores of Hudson's Bay and the hunting-grounds of Oregon find customers in France, who also take off a portion of our surplus tobacco. Cochineal from Mexico and Guatemala is shipped largely to Smyrna, Petersburg, Leghorn, and other continental ports, for the purpose of dyeing woollen and silken fabrics the gayest of all colours—scarlet.' To these must be added the most important of the whole of our exportations—namely, our own manufactures; and to give an idea of the whereabouts of this outward traffic on the single day in question, it would be necessary to pass once more round the entire coast-line of the globe.

All these names and figures are taken from the lecture; but very many more are left behind, with many facts and anecdotes respecting foreign productions, and many reflections arising out of the subject, making up, in the whole, a very desirable pamphlet for reference and instruction. But, nevertheless, the title is a misnomer: it is not a day's business in the port of London, or much more than half a day's business, the author having entirely forgotten the share the metropolis has in the great coasting trade. This trade is carried on between the various ports of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and employs every year about 150,000 vessels, of 11,000,000 or 12,000,000 tons, going constantly to and fro. The revenue of the city is in great part made up from the dues paid by coasting vessels, amounting in the article of coal alone to L.150,000 or L.160,000. Of this article London takes nearly 3,000,000 tons in the year, imported in nearly 10,000 ships.

The tokens of this business, mighty as it is, are hardly visible beyond the spot where it is carried on. It is but a stone plunged into a lake, the circles it gives rise to growing fainter as they recede, till they are altogether lost in the smooth and slumberous expanse. The roar of wagons, which deafens us in the immediate thoroughfares from the river, sinks gradually as the vehicles separate and disperse, and is entirely lost when they disappear one knows not how or whither. The shops give no hint of the increase of wealth; the people live, as usual, surrounded by the necessities, comforts, and luxuries of the entire globe; the great pulse of the metropolis throbs steadily on, unaffected by the fever of its port.

The merchants, in the meantime, sit quietly in their counting-houses, reading and writing their letters, and directing the commerce of the world without uttering a word. The clerks, each in his own department, ply their monotonous task, inscribing from hour to hour, from day to day, the history of civilisation in unintelligible books. The masters of the wealth now arriving and departing have never seen it with their eyes; and if the owners of the ships that bear it to and from the four quarters of the globe have at any time curiosity enough to visit them, they pass through the exhibition like strangers, gazing with unintelligent eyes on wonders which it is not their business to comprehend. But the treasure with which these multitudinous pro-

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ductions are bought and sold? The chink of money is never heard except in small sums required for the wages of the working-men. Little bits of paper containing promises and acknowledgments are the representatives of value, and in wholesale transactions gold and silver are never seen. In this way the merchant calmly commits some enormous sum to the hands of a boy, to proceed to its destination by channels and agencies he knows nothing about.

But this preternatural stillness is only superficial. The hopes, the fears, the joys, the agonies, that attend a single day's business in the port of London are indescribable; and the circles of *this* central agitation extend to thousands of hearts throughout the country with which it has no obvious connection. The excitement, however, is for the most part wholesome. It stirs up the languid thoughts; it sends them abroad on the world; it establishes a connection between the various families of the human race. It is felt likewise in the industry of the nation even in its smallest and remotest islands, for there is not an occupation in the British islets that is not in some way or other, directly or indirectly, affected by the commerce of the capital. The same influence is felt abroad, and is not confined to the coast-line of the four continents, but extends far into their interior. Men who know not the name of England work her work and receive her wages; and all soils, all climates, all races, combine to furnish a day's business for the port of London.

#### THE OLD GRAY HOUSE.

In the north of France, near the Belgian frontier, is situated a small obscure town. It is surrounded by high fortifications, which seem ready to crush the mean houses in the centre. Enclosed, so to speak, in a network of walls, the poor little town has never sent a suburb to wander on the smooth green turf outside; but as the population increased, new streets sprang up within the boundary, crowding the already narrow space, and giving to the whole the aspect of some huge prison.

The climate of the north of France during half the year is usually damp and gloomy. I shall never forget the sensation of sadness which I felt when obliged by circumstances to leave the gay sunny south, and take up my abode for a while in the town I have described. Every day I walked out; and in order to reach the nearest gate, I had to pass through a narrow lane, so very steep, that steps were cut across it in order to render the ascent less difficult. Traversing this disagreeable alley, it happened one day that my eyes rested on a mean-looking, gray-coloured house, which stood detached from the others. Seldom, indeed, could a ray of sunshine light up its small green-paned windows, and penetrate the interior of its gloomy apartments. During the winter the frozen snow on the steps made it so dangerous to pass through the narrow alley, that its slippery pavement seemed quite deserted. I do not remember to have met a single person there in the course of my daily walk; and my eye used to rest with compassion on the silent gray house. 'I hope,' thought I, 'that its inhabitants are old—it would be fearful to be young there!' Spring came; and in the narrow lane the ice changed into moisture; then the damp gradually dried up, and a few blades of grass began to appear beneath the rampart wall. Even in this gloomy passage there were tokens of awakening life, but the gray house remained silent and sad as before. Passing by it, as usual, in the beginning of June, I remarked, placed on the window-sill of the open casement, a glass containing a bunch of violets. 'Ah,' thought I, 'there is a soul here!'

To love flowers, one must either be young, or have preserved the memories of youth. The enjoyment of their perfume implies something ideal and refined; and among the poor a struggle between the necessities of the body and the instincts of the soul. I looked at the

violets with a feeling of sadness, thinking that they probably formed the single solace of some weary life. The next day I returned. Even in that gloomy place the sweet rejoicing face of summer had appeared, and dissipated the chill silence of the air. Birds were twittering, insects humming, and one of the windows in the old gray house was wide open.

Seated near it was a woman working busily with her needle. It would be difficult to tell her age, for the pallor and sadness of her countenance might have been caused as much by sorrow as by years, and her cheek was shadowed by a profusion of rich dark hair. She was thin, and her fingers were long and white. She wore a simple brown dress, a black apron, and white collar; and I remarked the sweet though fading bunch of violets carefully placed within the folds of her kerchief. Her eyes met mine, and she gently inclined her head. I then saw more distinctly that she had just reached the limit which separates youth from mature age. She had suffered, but probably without a struggle, without a murmur—perhaps without a tear. Her countenance was calm and resigned, but it was the stillness of death. I fancied she was like a drooping flower, which, without being broken, bends noiselessly towards the earth.

Every day I saw her in the same place, and without speaking, we exchanged a salutation. On Sundays I missed her, and concluded that she walked into the country, for each Monday a fresh bunch of violets appeared in the window. I conjectured that she was poor, working at embroidery for her support; and I discovered that she was not alone in the house, for one day a somewhat impatient voice called 'Ursula!' and she rose hastily. The tone was not that of a master, neither did she obey the summons after the manner of a servant, but with an expression of heartfelt readiness; yet the voice breathed no affection; and I thought that Ursula perchance was not loved by those with whom she lived.

Time passed on, and our silent intimacy increased. At length each day I gathered some fresh flowers, and placed them on the window-sill. Ursula blushed, and took them with a gentle, grateful smile. Clustering in her girdle, and arranged within her room, they brought summer to the old gray house. It happened one evening that as I was returning through the alley a sudden storm of rain came on. Ursula darted towards the door, caught my hand as I was passing, and drew me into the narrow passage which led to her room. Then the poor girl clasped both my hands in hers, and murmured softly, 'Thanks!' It was the first time I had heard her voice, and I entered her apartment. It was a large, low room, with a red-tiled floor, furnished with straw-chairs ranged along the walls. Being lighted by only one small window, it felt damp and gloomy. Ursula was right to seat herself close by the casement to seek a little light and air. I understood the reason of her paleness—it was not that she had lost the freshness of youth, but that she had never possessed it. She was bleached like a flower that has blossomed in the shade.

In the farthest corner of the room, seated on arm-chairs, were two persons, an old man and woman. The latter was knitting without looking at her work—she was blind. The man was unemployed; he gazed vacantly at his companion without a ray of intelligence in his face: it was evident that he had overpassed the ordinary limit of human life, and that now his body alone existed. Sometimes in extreme old age the mind, as though irritated by its long captivity, tries to escape from its prison, and in its efforts, breaks the harmonious chord that links them together. It chafes against the shattered walls; it has not taken flight, but it feels itself no longer in a place of rest.

These, then, were the inhabitants of the silent gray house—a blind old woman, an imbecile old man, and a young girl faded before her time by the sadness and gloom that surrounded her! Her life had been a blank; each year had borne away some portion of her youth, her beauty, and her hope, and left her nothing but

silence and oblivion. I often returned to visit Ursula, and one day, while I sat next her in the window, she told me the simple story of her life.

'I was born,' said she, 'in this house, and I have never quitted it; but my parents are not natives of this country—they came here as strangers, without either friends or relatives. When they married, they were already advanced in life; for I cannot remember them ever being young. My mother became blind, and this misfortune rendered her melancholy and austere; so that our house was enveloped in gloom. I was never permitted to sing, or play, or make the slightest noise: very rarely did I receive a caress. Yet my parents loved me: they never told me that they did; but I judged their hearts by my own, and I felt that I loved them. My days were not always as solitary as they are now; I had a sister'—Her eyes filled with tears, but they did not overflow; they were wont to remain hidden in the depths of her heart. After a few moments, she continued—'I had an elder sister: like our mother, she was grave and silent, but towards me she was tender and affectionate. We loved each other dearly, and shared between us the cares which our parents required. We never enjoyed the pleasure of rambling together through the fields, for one always remained at home; but whichever of us went out, brought flowers to the other, and talked to her of the sun, and the trees, and the fresh air. In the evenings we worked together by the light of a lamp; we could not converse much, for our parents used to slumber by our side; but whenever we looked up, we could see a loving smile on each other's face; and we went to repose in the same room, never lying down without saying "Good-night! I hope, dear sister, you will sleep well!" Was it not a trial to part? Yet I do not murmur: Martha is happy in heaven. I know not if it was the want of air and exercise, or the dull monotony of her life, which caused the commencement of Martha's illness, but I saw her gradually languish and fade. I alone was disquieted by it; my mother did not see her, and she never complained. With much difficulty I at length prevailed on my sister to see a physician. Alas! nothing could be done: she lingered for a time, and then died. The evening before her death, as I was seated by her bed, she clasped my hand between her trembling ones: "Adieu! my poor Ursula!" she said: "take courage, and watch well over our father and mother. They love us, Ursula; they love us, although they do not often say so. Take care of your health for their sake; you cannot die before them. Adieu! sister: don't weep for me too much, but pray to our heavenly Father. We shall meet again, Ursula!" Three days afterwards, Martha was borne away in her coffin, and I remained alone with my parents. When my mother first heard of my sister's death, she uttered a loud cry, sprang up, took a few hasty steps across the room, and then fell on the ground. I raised her up, and led her back to her arm-chair. Since then she has not wept, but she is more silent than before, save that her lips move in secret prayer. I have little more to tell. My father became completely imbecile, and at the same time we lost nearly the whole of our little property. I have succeeded in concealing this loss from my parents; making money for their support by selling my embroidery. I have no one to speak to since my sister's death; I love books, but I have no time for reading—I must work. It is only on Sunday that I breathe the fresh air; and I do not walk far, as I am alone. Some years since, when I was very young, I used to dream while I sat in this window. I peopled the solitude with a thousand visions which brightened the dark hours. Now a sort of numbness has fallen on my thoughts—I dream no more. While I was young, I used to hope for some change in my destiny; now I am twenty-nine years old, and sorrow has chastened my spirit: I no longer hope or fear. In this place I shall finish my lonely days. Do not think that I have found resignation without a conflict. There were times when my heart revolted at

living without being loved, but I thought of Martha's gentle words, "We shall meet again, sister!" and I found peace. Now I often pray—I seldom weep. And you, madam—are you happy?"

I did not answer this question of Ursula's. Speaking to her of happiness would be like talking of an ungrateful friend to one whom he has deserted.

Some months afterwards, on a fine autumn morning, as I was preparing to go to Ursula, I received a visit from a young officer who had lately joined the garrison. He was the son of an old friend of my husband's, and we both felt a lively interest in his welfare. Seeing me prepared for a walk, he offered his arm, and we proceeded towards the dwelling of Ursula. I chanced to speak of her; and as the young officer, whom I shall call Maurice d'Erval, seemed to take an interest in her story, I related it to him as we walked slowly along. When we reached the old gray house he looked at her with pity and respect, saluted her, and withdrew. Ursula, startled at the presence of a stranger, blushed slightly. At that moment she looked almost beautiful. I know not what vague ideas crossed my brain, but I looked at her, and then, without speaking, I drew the rich bands of her hair into a more becoming form, I took a narrow black velvet collar off my own neck, and passed it round hers, and I arranged a few brilliant flowers in her girdle. Ursula smiled without understanding why I did so: her smile always pained me—there is nothing more sad than the smile of the unhappy. They seem to smile for others, not for themselves. Many days passed without my seeing Maurice d'Erval, and many more before chance led us together near the old gray house.

It was on our return from a country excursion with a large gay party. On entering the town, we all dispersed in different directions: I took the arm of Maurice, and led him towards Ursula's abode. It was one of those soft, calm autumn evenings, when the still trees are coloured by the rays of the setting sun, and everything breathes repose. It is a time when the soul is softened, when we become better, when we feel ready to weep without the bitterness of sorrow. Ursula, as usual, was seated in the window. A slanting ray of sunshine falling on her head lent an unwonted lustre to her dark hair: her eyes brightened when she saw me, and she smiled her own sad smile. Her sombre dress showed to advantage her slender, gracefully-bending figure, and a bunch of violets, her favourite flower, was fastened in her bosom. There was something in the whole appearance of Ursula which suited harmoniously the calm, sad beauty of the evening, and my companion felt it. As we approached, he fixed his eyes on the poor girl, who, timid as a child of fifteen, hung down her head, and blushed deeply. Maurice stopped, exchanged a few words with us both, and then took his leave. But from that time he constantly passed through the narrow alley, and paused each time for a moment to salute Ursula. One day, accompanied by me, he entered her house.

There are hearts in this world so unaccustomed to hope, that they cannot comprehend happiness when it comes to them. Enveloped in her sadness, which, like a thick veil, hid from her sight all external things, Ursula neither saw nor understood. She remained under the eyes of Maurice as under mine—dejected and resigned. As to the young man, I could not clearly make out what was passing in his mind. It was not love for Ursula, at least so I thought, but it was that tender pity which is nearly allied to it. The romantic soul of Maurice pleased itself in the atmosphere of sadness which surrounded Ursula. Gradually they began to converse; and in sympathising with each other on the misery of life, they experienced that happiness whose existence they denied. Months passed on; the pleasant spring came back again; and one evening, while walking with a large party, Maurice d'Erval drew me aside, and after some indifferent remarks, said, 'Does not the most exalted happiness consist in making others share it with you? Is there not great sweetness in

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imparting joy to one who would otherwise pass a life of tears?" I looked at him anxiously without speaking. "Yes," said he, "dear friend, go ask Ursula if she will marry me!"

An exclamation of joy was my reply, and I hurried towards the gray house. I found Ursula, as usual, seated at her work. Solitude, silence, and the absence of all excitement, had lulled her spirit into a sort of drowsiness. She did not suffer; she even smiled languidly when I appeared, but this was the only sign of animation she displayed. I feared not giving a sudden shock to this poor paralysed soul, or stirring it into a violent tumult of happiness: I wanted to see if the mental vigour was extinct, or merely dormant. I placed my chair next hers, I took both her hands in mine, and fixing my eyes on hers, I said—"Ursula, Maurice d'Erval has desired me to ask you if you will be his wife!"

The girl was struck as if with a thunderbolt; her eyes beamed through the tears that filled them, and her blood, rushing through the veins, mantled richly beneath her skin. Her chest heaved, her heart beat almost audibly, and her hands grasped mine with a convulsive pressure. Ursula had only slumbered, and now the voice of love awakened her. She loved suddenly: hitherto she might perchance have loved unwittingly, but now the veil was rent, and she *knew* that she loved.

After a few moments, she passed her hand across her forehead, and said in a low voice, "No: it is not possible!"

I simply repeated the same phrase—"Maurice d'Erval asks you if you will be his wife"—in order to accustom her to the sound of the words, which, like the notes of a harmonious chord, formed for her, poor thing, a sweet, unwonted melody.

"His wife!" repeated she with ecstasy—"his wife!" And running towards her mother, she cried, "Mother, do you hear it? He asks me to be his wife!"

"Daughter," replied the old blind woman, "my beloved daughter, I knew that, sooner or later, God would recompense your virtues."

"My God!" cried Ursula, "what hast thou done for me this day? *His wife!—beloved daughter!*" And she fell on her knees with clasped hands, and her face covered with tears. At that moment footsteps were heard in the passage. "It is he!" cried Ursula. "He brings life!" I hastened away, and left Ursula glowing with tearful happiness to receive Maurice d'Erval alone.

From that day Ursula was changed. She grew young and beautiful under the magic influence of joy, yet her happiness partook in some measure of her former character: it was calm, silent, and reserved; so that Maurice, who had first loved a pale, sad woman seated in the shade, was not obliged to change the colouring of the picture, although Ursula was now happy. They passed long evenings together in the low dull room, lighted only by the moonbeams, conversing and musing together.

Ursula loved with simplicity. She said to Maurice, "I love you—I am happy—and I thank you for it!" The old gray house was the only scene of these interviews. Ursula worked with unabated diligence, and never left her parents. But the walls of that narrow dwelling no longer confined her soul: it had risen to freedom, and taken its flight. The sweet magic of hope brightens not only the future, but the present, and through the medium of its all-powerful prism changes the colouring of all things. The old house was as mean-looking and gloomy as ever, but one feeling, enshrined in the heart of a woman, changed it to a palace. Dreams of hope, although you fleet and vanish like golden clouds in the sky, yet come, come to us ever! Those who have never known you, are a thousand times poorer than those who live to regret you!

Thus there passed a happy time for Ursula. But a day came when Maurice, entering her room in haste, said, "Dearest, we must hasten our marriage; the regi-

ment is about to be moved to another garrison, and we must be ready to set out."

"Are we going far, Maurice?"

"Does it frighten my Ursula to think of seeing distant countries? There are many lands more beautiful than this."

"Oh no, Maurice, not for myself, but for my parents: they are too old to bear a long journey." Maurice looked at his betrothed without speaking. Although he well knew that, in order to share his wandering destiny, Ursula must leave her parents, yet he had never reflected seriously on the subject. He had foreseen her grief, but confiding in her affection, he had thought that his devoted love would soothe every sorrow of which he was not himself the cause. It was now necessary to come to an explanation; and sad as the inevitable pain which he was about to inflict on his betrothed, Maurice took her hand, made her sit down in her accustomed place, and said gently—"Dearest, it would be impossible for your father and mother to accompany us in our wandering life. Until now, my Ursula, we have led a loving, dreamy life, without entering soberly into our future plans. I have no fortune but my sword; and now, at the commencement of my career, my income is so small, that we shall have to submit together to many privations. I reckon on your courage; but you alone must follow me. The presence of your parents would only serve to entail misery on them, and hopeless poverty on us."

"Leave my father and my mother!" cried Ursula.

"Leave them, with their little property, in this house; confide them to careful hands; and follow the fortunes of your husband."

"Leave my father and my mother!" repeated Ursula.

"But do you know that the pittance they possess would never suffice for their support—that without their knowledge, I work to increase it—and that, during many years, I have tended them alone?"

"My poor Ursula!" replied Maurice, "we must submit to what is inevitable. Hitherto you have concealed from them the loss of their little fortune; tell it to them now, as it cannot be helped. Try to regulate their expenditure of the little which remains, for, alas! we shall have nothing to give them."

"Go away, and leave them here! Impossible! I tell you I must work for them."

"Ursula, my Ursula!" said Maurice, pressing both her hands in his, "do not allow yourself, I conjure you, to be carried away by the first impulse of your generous heart. Reflect for a moment: we do not refuse to give, but we have it not. Even living alone, we shall have to endure many privations."

"I cannot leave them," said Ursula, looking mournfully at the two old people slumbering in their arm-chairs.

"Do you not love me, Ursula?" The poor girl only replied by a torrent of tears.

Maurice remained long with her, pouring forth protestations of love, and repeating explanations of their actual position. She listened without replying; and at length he took his leave. Left alone, Ursula leant her head on her hand, and remained without moving for many hours. Alas! the tardy gloom of happiness which brightened her life for a moment was passing away: the blessed dream was fled never to return! Silence, oblivion, darkness, regained possession of that heart whence love had chased them. During the long midnight hours who can tell what passed in the poor girl's mind? God knew: she never spoke of it.

When day dawned, she shuddered, closed the window, which had remained open during the night, and, trembling from the chill which seized both mind and body, she took paper and a pen, and wrote—"Farewell, Maurice! I remain with my father and my mother: they have need of me. To abandon them in their old age would be to cause their death: they have only me in the world. My sister, on her deathbed, confided them to me, saying, 'We shall meet again, Ursula!' If I neglected my duties, I should never see





Oceanis, as the French name the antipodal regions. The fact in the latter case is positive, although the geographical separation between the two races renders it difficult of explanation. Here ethnology will have to step in and try to find the relationship by affinity of language. Perhaps M. Dulaurier's recently published treatise 'On the Oceanic Tongues (*Langues Océaniques*)' considered Ethnographically and Philologically, may prove of service in initiating this inquiry; as also Mr Appleyard's 'Kafir Language.'

Besides these groups, M. Froberville has discovered a fourth, with the nose aquiline, lips not too thick, and face not prognathous, which he calls *metis-semitic*. From the concordance which he finds between their notions of cosmogony and the statements of Scripture, and more especially from certain traces of manners which seem to partake of the customs of the Syro-Chaldean peoples, and the multiplied evidences of the worship of Moloch yet existing among them, he concludes that these African *metis-semitic* people are derived from a cross of the Phœnicians with the primitive negroes of the country. These are the chief points as yet brought out: the more they are studied, the more, in M. Froberville's opinion, will the unity of the origin of the human race arise out of them with scientific proof. The reporting committee describe the facts as of the highest anthropological interest, and their discoverer is to be encouraged to continue his researches.

M. Gasparin replied to Magendie's comments on his communication about 'Alimentary Regimen,' that substances are not alimentary solely by virtue of the azote they contain. Hay holds as much azote as bread does, and yet it will not nourish men, though it will nourish the herbivorous quadrupeds. He explains that animals die from eating none but highly-azotised food, because their supply of hydrogen and carbon is then insufficient to maintain the pulmonary combustion. In turn, M. Gasparin is informed by a M. Charpentier, who writes from Belgium, that his conclusions respecting the miners' diet are not quite correct. And yet another—M. d'Abbadie, whose name has been heard much of late in controversy on the sources of the Nile—while he does not dispute all that M. Gasparin advances touching the nutritive properties of coffee, shows, nevertheless, that the Wahabias, who drink no coffee, are not less robust or capable of endurance than their neighbours. The Mussulmans of Abyssinia, he says, drink coffee several times a day, and yet are less able to bear fasting than the Christians, and he gives an instance:—'In disastrous retreats across countries without provisions, the Mussulmans were always less active than the Christians. The latter would consider it a renunciation of their faith to drink coffee, yet they follow the army on foot loaded with heavy weapons, and at need during three days, with no other ballast—I was going to say nutriment—than a little earth diluted with water. These soldiers are on active duty through Lent, their sole aliment during that time being a third of a litre of undressed flour daily, mingled with water, baked mostly under ashes, and eaten without leaven. This flour is less nutritive than that of wheat, and this single repast takes place towards sunset, after a day of fatigue and absolute fast.'

M. d'Abbadie states also, that although the custom of eating raw flesh prevails in Abyssinia, yet the natives themselves admit that this food is less nutritive than cooked or dried meat; and that 'meat dried in the sun repairs a man's strength more effectually than raw flesh, but less than a nutriment composed of flour.' These are remarkable facts, and perhaps the discussion of them may lead us to some useful economical principles.

Matteucci, whom I have more than once mentioned, has been appointed director of electric telegraphs in Sardinia: the proceedings of the Académie contain a dispute between him and Bois-Reymond on facts of electro-physiology, in which the latter denies the Italian philosopher's claim to merit. Arago has continued his photometry up to the eighth memoir; and is now com-

pleting his unfinished labours by the aid of younger savans whose sight is not so imperfect as his, and will ere long lay them before his confrères. M. d'Orbigny gives the result of ten years' study—'Zoological Researches on the Successive Course of Animalisation on the Surface of the Globe, from the most Ancient Zoological Times to the Present Epoch.' He takes the 24,000 known species of fossils, and groups all the orders from their primitive minimum to their maximum development. M. Legrand has a memoir 'On the Distinction to be Established between Scrofulous and Tuberculous Affections.' Those which are 'necessarily incurable' are the scrofulous in appearance, but tuberculous in reality. Then M. Mariage proposes a 'New Method of Keeping Books by Double Entry,' and a 'System of Numeration, having for Base the Number Eight.' He contends that the Chinese lines named *koua*, which have been so variously interpreted, are in reality the symbol of numeration by octaves. A commission has been appointed to examine into the merits of his researches. And—talking of the Chinese—M. Paravey finds that in ancient times there were relations between China and Egypt, and says that the new facts confirm what he advanced some thirty years ago on the affinity between the constellations of the two countries. There—who will say the Académie has been idle? I have not told you half. Were I to enter upon the abstruser subjects, they would be very hard for your readers, and, what is more, very hard for me.

The age of wonders is not past: for while astronomers are talking about two or three new planets, 'such little ones,' of a sprinkling of comets, of falling-stars, and detonations in the atmosphere in serene weather, the government of Portugal has woke up, or some members of it, which is the same thing, and determined to revive and increase the capabilities of the astronomical observatory at Lisbon. Some observatories confine their far-spyings to double stars and other very remote mysteries; some to lunar meridians; others are comet-catchers; and the Portuguese establishment is to be especially devoted 'to the study of zénithal stars'—a branch of astronomy for which it is well situated. An efficient supply of additional instruments is to be provided; and the proposed series of magnetic and meteorological observations will augment the existing data, and fill up a blank that has too long existed at the extreme south of Europe.

There is a scheme afoot in Paris for a 'Learned Societies' Review.' La Patrie invites the sodalities of the civilised world to send in reports of their doings for publication in its feuilleton under the supervision of an able editor. The paper is thus to become 'a bond of intelligence and of sympathy between all the societies, artistic, literary, scientific, and industrial, which constitute the glory and assure the fortune of civilised peoples.' We may doubt if we like.

There are a few Yankee notions from over the water to the west which may bear a little showing up on this side. One enterprising inventor has taken out a patent for trouser-straps; a second, for improved shoe-pegs; a third, for a venetian-blind, which, by means of a movable slip held at one side by springs, admits of being used in railway cars and other places generally considered inappropriate; a fourth, for coffins, 'corresponding nearly to the human form'; a fifth, 'for plaiting shirts'; a sixth, for 'sausage-stuffers'; a seventh, a Mr Monaghan, for 'a method of recording the ayes and nays in legislative assemblies.' This operation to be effected by two wires leading from each member's desk to the desk of the clerk of the house, where they terminate in a lever, which, by its action, impresses a mark on a list of the house, written or printed, placed ready to receive it. The operation may be repeated as often as required without additional trouble, by preparing a number of lists beforehand. A clever Speaker would of course know when frequent divisions were coming on, and provide accordingly; the members would have only to touch the black or white keys as conscience or other

considerations impelled, and straightway the affirmatives or negatives are infixed; and then, instead of counting noses, or listening to 'ayes' and 'nays,' the clerk has only to number dots. Even in legislation Jonathan must have some time-saving process; but just imagine our 658 embodiments of the national will, with double that number of wires under their control! Wouldn't legislation come to a pretty pass? And then, as you know, it is only prime ministers and privy-councillors who are at present privileged to pull wires.

An eighth 'independent citizen,' in specifying his invention, says that it 'consists in so adjusting an instrument as to insure certainty in the operation of extracting teeth, and of preventing pain.' A ninth has a 'machine for cutting away bogs,' by 'arranging in a proper framework a set of horizontal steel knives, which are drawn along the surface of the ground, and cut or shove off what are termed bogs from marshy places, thus leaving a clear surface.' A tenth proposes an 'improvement in machinery for post-marking letters,' with the declaration, 'by the use of my machine, many thousand letters may be stamped in a very short period of time, in comparison to what would be consumed were the usual process of accomplishing the same resorted to.' An eleventh claims 'the mode of making curry-combs, by so constructing their body and teeth out of one solid sheet or piece of metal, by so cutting and bending the said sheet or piece of metal, that, without any material waste, and without the combining and riveting or fastening together separate and detached portions of the structure, I do make a complete body and teeth for the comb.' A twelfth (and his partner) make 'paper veneers,' and inform the public that 'the nature of our invention consists in taking the impression of all kinds of wood upon paper, which, by means of glue, or any other adhesive substance, can be placed upon all kinds of woodwork,' to be afterwards 'finished by the use of varnish.' A thirteenth is emphatic on his 'locomotive baby-tender'; a fourteenth on his 'improvement in shaving brushes,' set forth as 'the introduction of the soap by means of the screw and tube, through the handle into the brush, by which it may be fully impregnated; and also the combination in one of the box and brush, thereby saving time and trouble; for it is only necessary to wet the brush, and while the lather is making on the face the beard is softened.' Besides these, there is a sprinkling of 'gold-washers'; and though last, not least, a lady, Mary A. Woodward of Palmyra, has patented an 'improvement in fan rocking-chairs'; and 'claims as new the combining with a rocking-chair a curtain suspended upon a frame affixed to the back,' whereby transatlantic maids and matrons may fan themselves, and cool the air while taking their favourite see-saw recreation. Truly nothing is too great or too small for American genius! It reminds one of the elephant's trunk, condescending to the minute while capable of the tremendous.

Now for a word or two about books, and then to close. Herr A. A. Berthold of Göttingen has published a quarto 'On the Presence of Frogs in the Human Body,' a curious physiological subject. Another German, Dr Grodeck, has put forth a volume—'On the Democratic Malady, a New Species of Mania'—in which he endeavours to show that the late convulsions are to be regarded as an epidemic mania similar in its nature to those which have affected populations in former times, and of which we have historical record. It deprives its victims of reason, and leaves them with a fixed idea; and for the removal of this the doctor recommends 'useful reforms' and 'positive ameliorations,' with a more forcible inculcation of morality and religion. If the democratic cholera, as he says, does not abate by being taught to respect the force of right, the world will soon have to submit to right of force. Is the doctor in earnest, or is he, as Sam Weller says, 'poking fun'?

Auerbach has written a tragedy entitled, 'Andrew Hofer,' in which the efforts of the Tyrolean to throw off the yoke imposed on them by Napoleon are depicted

in dramatic poetry. We follow the mountain population in their glowing hope after the Archduke John's promise of succour to their abandonment by Austria, and the fearful vengeance of the French. Hofer stands prominently out as the hero, restraining or soothing his impulsive countrymen, until his betrayal into the hands of General Lefebvre, and execution within the fortifications of Mantua. D'Aubigné, too, is again in the field with 'Trois Siècles de Lutttes en Ecosse, ou Deux Rois et Deux Royaumes' ('Three Centuries of Conflict in Scotland, or Two Kings and Two Kingdoms')—wherein he records certain old and new facts concerning church history in your northern land.

### SINGULAR MÉSALLIANCE.

WILLIAM STURGEON was a young man of unexceptionable character and of handsome personal exterior, but of the humblest origin, and totally destitute of the commonest rudiments of education. His parents resided in the county of Wicklow, on the property, we conjecture, of the Marquis of Rockingham, now possessed by his collateral descendants, the Earls Fitzwilliam. This is a surmise, but, admitting its truth, the fact will readily be accounted for of the youth in question having been sent to London, and engaged as servant in the family of Lord Rockingham—Charles, the second marquis, whose memory Burke has so ably panegyrised, and whose upright and patriotic conduct as a statesman was fully equalled by his virtues in private life.

Here was William appointed as personal footman to the Lady Harriet Wentworth, youngest sister of the marquis, over whose large and splendid establishment she at this period (1764) presided as mistress. The lady was just twenty-six, plain in person, but clever and amiable.

The growing interest which after a short time she began to evince for her new and handsome attendant, was of course set down to motives purely benevolent, and therefore praiseworthy. She had him taught to read and write, and was herself at pains with his education. That a warmer feeling influenced her conduct no one ever dreamed, or that a woman of superior rank and intellect, in daily association with the highly-born and highly-favoured of the land, the sister of one of the most celebrated statesmen of the day, and with every opportunity afforded her of forming a suitable connection, could possibly contemplate so extraordinary a mésalliance as that of a union with her own footman!

Such, however, proved to be the case; and for nine days this singular affair was the talk and wonder of the fashionable world of London. In the midst of her infatuation, this lady evinced a degree of calculating prudence and discretion doubtless commendable, but certainly not a little surprising, for she entailed her fortune with the utmost circumspection. An annuity of £100 was settled on the young man, and this sum was to be continued to him even in the event, which she cautiously anticipated, of a mutual separation. On her children, if there should be any, she entailed the whole of her fortune; while, in the event of the marriage being unfruitful, it was to revert to her own family. This deed the lady vested out of her own power by placing it in the keeping of the celebrated Lord Mansfield—her uncle by marriage—whom at the same time she nominated trustee. It was drawn up by her own hand, and, as his lordship—a good judge in such matters—remarked, as binding as any lawyer could make it.

Just previous to Lady Harriet becoming the wife of Sturgeon, a suspicion was excited for the first time among his fellow-servants. Some trifling act of familiarity towards the lady, pardonable from one of her own rank, but impertinent, and altogether absurd in a domestic, chanced to be detected, and being duly reported to the housekeeper of Lord Rockingham, that person considered herself as fully justified in seeking

amongst their suits of a letter from his parents, the lady, the so great his father.

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amongst the young man's property for confirmation of their suspicions. This was soon afforded in the shape of a letter which William had commenced writing to his parents in Ireland. It dwelt on the kindness of his lady, their intended union, and the hope that this event, so great for him, might afford the means of benefiting his father and mother.

As may be conjectured, an express was at once sent off to Lord Rockingham, who at the time was visiting his estate in Yorkshire; but fortunately, or unfortunately, we hardly know which, it arrived too late. Before the marquis had reached London, the marriage had taken place. On pretence of going to view a collection of paintings which she wished to inspect before the hour for admitting strangers to the exhibition, Lady Harriet had left home unusually early, her liveried menial, as usual, in attendance. They had nearly reached the church, when the young man discovered that in his agitation he had forgotten the ring. He hurried home to procure it, and there being questioned as to his speedy return, he evaded the inquiry by remarking that his lady had neglected to bring the catalogue of the pictures.

After the ceremony, the newly-married couple went to Ireland, Lady Harriet wisely dropping her title for that of Mrs Sturgeon, by which humbler name she was ever afterwards known. William, who seems to have been a dutiful and exemplary son, often went to visit his parents, and was enabled, through his own comparative abundance, to administer in many ways to their comfort. Still, he was very reluctant to introduce them to his high-born bride, fearing to shock her with the poverty of the parental roof and the homely ignorance of those who had given him birth. She, however, was not to be deterred: so, finding the unwillingness of her husband continue, the lady, availing herself of a temporary absence on his part, drove to the humble dwelling of the parents, who, it may well be supposed, were enraptured at the visit, and thought they could not do enough for her who had made the fortune of their son.

Our story goes on to say that William Sturgeon, arriving unexpectedly, was most agreeably surprised, as well as gratified, by the scene which awaited him. It was indeed creditable to all parties, but especially so to the high-born wife, who, however improperly she may have acted in the first instance in descending from her proper sphere, evinced a right feeling, seldom met with, in not appearing ashamed of those with whom she had voluntarily chosen to connect herself.

But however kindly-disposed towards the humble and grateful relatives of her husband, it may easily be imagined that Ireland was no agreeable residence for the sister of Lord Rockingham, who was then in the zenith of power and prosperity, and whose name was well known throughout the empire. A residence abroad was therefore wisely determined upon, and thither the pair proceeded. In one of the continental towns Mrs Sturgeon and her husband lived in quiet privacy for many years. The conduct of the latter was perfectly unexceptionable; while that of his lady having eventually gained for her the forgiveness of the noble family to which she was allied, her son by Sturgeon was educated and brought forward by them.

Of the father there is little more to relate. Having survived his wife, he returned to his native land, and once more resumed the humble occupation of the farm and unambitious pursuits of lowly rural life. Within the last twenty-five years he was yet living, having been seen by a friend of the writer. He was then a hale, venerable old man, of stately presence, and with the remains of much personal beauty. Of the curious particulars of his younger days few were aware. He seldom alluded to them; and such occurrences usually cause but a brief sensation in the busy circles of fashion, when the individuals themselves retire from the gay world.

Of the son of this singularly-matched couple it may not be uninteresting to say a few words ere we conclude

our article. This youth possessed mental and personal advantages of no common order; while, as before stated, the noble relatives of his mother afforded him the benefit of a good education. He was early destined for the army; and some years after, while quartered in the south of Ireland, was thrown into the society of a young lady, at that time the object of much interest and sympathy among the immediate circle of her personal friends and admirers. This was the daughter of the celebrated Irish barrister, John Philpott Curran; a lady whom the poet Moore, in the spirit of ardent patriotism, has immortalised in his beautiful lines beginning, 'She is far from the land.' We find her also the heroine of that affecting-told tale, 'The Broken Heart,' in the 'Sketch-Book' of Washington Irving; whose poetic imagination invests her with charms, personal and mental, to which Miss Curran had no pretensions.

When first met by Major Sturgeon, she was still the victim of an all-absorbing passion for the brave but ill-fated Robert Emmett, whose misguided enthusiasm in the cause of his country had recently brought him to an ignominious death. In hopeless anguish she yet clung to the memory of him for whose sake filial ties had been broken, and she herself had become an outcast from the paternal roof, supported only by the charity of friends.

Her sad history interested and gained for her the affections of Major Sturgeon, who, much against the wishes of his relations, persisted, in a spirit of romantic ardour, in his suit, though for a considerable time without success. A sense of gratitude, however, aided by the conviction of her painfully-dependent state, induced Miss Curran after a while to relent. She married, giving to her lover at the same time the not very satisfactory assurance that her affections could never be his. As a wife, we have reason to believe her conduct was irreproachable; but she did not long survive the union; while her gallant husband, who, had he lived, would probably have risen to the summit of his profession, was doomed to perish in the service of his country, having been shortly after killed in one of our peninsular wars.

#### ENGLISH AND SCOTCH.

Unless whisky-drinking be a virtue north of the Tweed, it is difficult to make out the assumption of superior morality for the people of Scotland. If the traveller compare the indications of civilisation in the middle and lower classes of the English and Scotch, he will find himself obliged to confess that there is a deficiency north of the Tweed, especially among the female half of the community, on whom civilisation mainly depends, in those smaller usages, habits, and ways of living, which add to the comfort and wellbeing of common civilised life. There is a sluttishness about the womankind and all the women's work in a Scotch dwelling of the lower or even of the middle-class family—a dirty contentedness of husband and wife with any discomfort or nuisance of use and wont—which stands remarkably in contrast with the order, regularity, tidiness, and cleaning, dusting, and scouring propensities of the housewives of the same classes in any English town or village. The Scotch people of the middle and lower classes may have more and better school instruction, are more religious, and more intellectual in their religion, more frugal and prudent, except in the use of spirituous liquors; but the English of the same classes live in a more civilised way, are of more refined and civilised habits, are better brought up, although worse educated. Their manners towards each other, their habits of regard for others, and their self-respect, and the regularity, nicety, and spirit of order in their households which proceed from self-respect, are more cultivated. The English females of those classes are brought up in their little brick tenements to keep a cleaner and more cheerful house, and a more regular housekeeping, on earnings as small as the means of the same class of labourers and tradesmen in Scotland. The table and tablecloth, the plate, and knife and fork, are laid out with decent regularity and cleanliness, even in the poorest dwelling of the working-man, should it only be to grace a dinner of bread and cheese. What a routing, and driving, and bawling, and scolding, all the morning, in a 'sma' Scotch family that keeps but one bare-legged ser-

vant lassie,' before things are got into any decent order! In England, in a small tradesman's or working-man's family, you wonder how the housework of the female—the sweeping, cleaning, bed-making, cooking, and such work—is done so quietly and so nicely, with only the wife's pair of hands. All is in order, as if the fairy folk had been helping all night with the scouring and rubbing.—*Laing's Social State of Europe.*

#### TO AFFIX POSTAGE STAMPS.

The following notice has been issued from the Post-Office:—'Wet the cover of the letter with a sponge moderately, but not too slightly. Press the stamp down carefully with a dry blotting paper, continue the pressure until the stamp appears to be firmly attached. As a highly-glazed surface is unfavourable to adhesion, the more glossy the surface of the cover, the more carefully should the label be affixed.'

#### TRUE GREATNESS.

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion: it is easy in solitude to live after our own. But the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of his character.—*Emerson.*

#### THE OLD TREE'S FALL.

AND so man's ruthless hand at last  
Hath laid thee low, old tree;  
Unmindful of thy glory past,  
When thou wert waving free;  
When in thy green and leafy pride,  
Thy broad young arms were stretching wide,  
And seemed to sing with glee,  
As summer winds with fitful swell  
Amid thy leafage rose and fell.

How many a winter's wind has moaned  
Around thy branches strong,  
Whose wildly-tossing arms loud groaned  
Beneath its stormy song!  
How many a sultry sun has seen  
Thy glittering robe of vernal green,  
And glanced thy leaves among!  
But winter's cold and summer's glow  
Thy stalwart arms no more shall know!

Here in the days that long are dead  
Thy presence graced the wild,  
When round a living landscape spread  
In beauty undefiled;  
Lord of the solitude wert thou,  
And sunbeams o'er thy stately brow  
In lonely lustre smiled;  
And morn arose and evening fell  
To hail the king of wood and dell.

And morn arose and evening fell,  
And still the time went on,  
When, lo, as thy old trunk could tell,  
A hundred years are gone!  
And cottage homes and hearths are seen,  
And round thee here the village green  
In mellow sunlight shone;  
And children 'neath thy pleasant shade  
Through many a summer noontide played.

Oh then to aged men and boys  
Thy hoary arms were dear;  
And well remembered were the joys  
They all had tasted here;  
And those who roamed upon the sea  
Still loved the ancient village tree,  
And mused from year to year  
On all the joy that there would reign,  
When they should homeward turn again.

Old Time, in his relentless flight,  
Disturbed thy calm repose,  
And where the village green was bright  
A busy town arose:  
To love thee men no longer recked,  
But sterner days of cold neglect,  
Thy blackened boughs disclose;  
And birds no more amid them sung,  
As when thy leaves were green and young.

Then thy broad arms drooped downward fast  
Beneath this darker time,  
And men forgot their virtue past,  
And turned to guilt and crime;  
And gripping poverty arose  
And filled the land with countless woes,  
Unrecked of in thy prime;  
And thousands passed thee day by day,  
But left thee here to meet decay.

When all of good is past, Old Tree!  
'Tis meet that thou shouldst die;  
I see the strong limbs torn from thee  
Without a passing sigh.  
No more the village green is bright,  
But Gloom and Grief have spread their night  
Where now thy branches lie;  
And scarce a pang my breast can swell  
To hear the broad axe strike thy knell.

'Tis done! A hoary giant dead—  
A guardian spirit passed—  
Around the severed arms lie spread  
In desolation vast.  
Keep back the tear—it must not fall—  
We would not now its strength recall  
To glory overcast:  
Revered, beloved, held dear of yore,  
Alas, we ne'er shall see thee more!

TORQUAY, July 1969.

PICTOR.

#### GOTHLAND AS A FIELD OF EMIGRATION.

With reference to notices on this subject in the numbers of the Journal for March 9th and June 22d, and to a number of private letters addressed to us on the same subject, it is proper to state that seven individuals who were inclined to become settlers, and who went to make personal inspection of the lands offered for sale, have returned with an unfavourable opinion. Their statement is, that four-fifths of the lands are merely peat-bogs, 'of which thousands of acres exist in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, possessing physical advantages of a kind superior to those bogs in Gothland, and therefore more favourable for making pecuniary investments, and possessing, besides, social advantages immeasurably beyond what are to be found at present in any part of Sweden.'

This, though involving what is obviously matter of mere opinion, will probably be sufficient to warn any other persons from taking the trouble of visiting Gothland, until equally weighty testimony of an opposite nature can be adduced. We have in the meantime discharged our duty in making the opinion of the seven visitors known, and allowing it to have its weight against that of the individuals on whose information our former statements were founded. It is to be regretted that even the trouble of a personal examination of the island should have been incurred without any good result; but it must be remembered that the very fact of our recommending only this being done, shows that the possibility of a disappointment was to be contemplated. At the same time, we must observe that we did not call attention to this island without good authority. We mainly acted in compliance with the express desire of H. B. M. consul at Stockholm, who, having visited the island, and seen what he believed excellent soil ('six feet deep black loam' is his expression), thought that the enterprise of effecting agricultural improvements there was one worthy of the more energetic spirits among our countrymen. Mr Laing, who is usually far from being partial to Sweden, spoke in high terms of this island, and particularly of its climate. To a similar purport was the report of Mr George [not Henry, as formerly stated] Stephens, an English land-valuer. We acted upon these recommendations alone; for though we had some conversation with a member of the land company at Stockholm, we were neither asked, nor should we have consented, to go one step upon his authority. It is farther to be remarked that we published, in the second instance, the report of an East Lothian farmer, who, after a personal examination, adopted extremely moderate views of the lands offered for sale—describing them nearly in the same terms as the seven subsequent visitors, though still expressing a favourable opinion of the general prospect which they held out. This gentleman afterwards accepted an agency or stewardship on the company's lands, and went to settle in Gothland. The seven experimental visitors, having been in possession of his report a month before setting out, and being fully aware of his subsequent acceptance of the agency, may be said to have been in circumstances to judge for themselves whether it was still worth while to take a look of the island; and we do not see that any blame can justly rest with us, who aimed only at furnishing them with information, and had been equally ready to publish moderate views of the island as others of a more favourable character.

It is to be hoped that some gentleman, enabled by his position to take an impartial view of the lands offered to settlers in Gothland, will at least endeavour to explain how different men have happened to see the country under such various lights.

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